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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by the guest chaplain, Bishop Geralyn Wolf of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, Providence, RI.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, to the poor, You have united us to bring uncommon hope; to innocent captives, release; to the blind, vision, stretching boundaries of imagination.

The poor in every land stretch out empty bowls, and we do not fill them; political captives seek justice, and we respond through the captivity of fear; the sick yearn for healing arts, yet the cries of children still prevail.

O gracious God, You gave us a rich heritage of compromise, and we cling unyieldingly to personal truths; You gave us a world abundant in resources, and we squander our inheritance; You gave us wisdom and insight, and our disagreements sound like loud-clanging symbols.

O God, forgive us. Release the fires of integrity that dwell within the hearts of this great Chamber, and make us urgent to mend the torn fabric of peace, to stretch courageously beyond political comfort, and to bring holy blessings to all God's people everywhere. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 9, 2005.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule 1, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN E. SUNUNU, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SUNUNU thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. REED. Mr. President, may I say how proud I am of Bishop Wolf, not only for her prayer but for her extraordinary service to the people of the Rhode Island diocese. Bishop Wolf is a remarkable person, a remarkable pastor but also a remarkable individual. Unlike many people who would be content with the trappings of their ecclesiastical office, she actually has lived with the homeless in New York, Rhode Island, and Philadelphia. She endured what they endured, she saw their suffering. She bore witness to their suffering not only in her experiences but her work in Rhode Island. She is a remarkable woman who leads by example literally and constantly reminds us of our obligations not just to ourselves but to our neighbors. We are very proud to have her as our Episcopal bishop.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, this morning we will return to the nomination of William Pryor to be a judge of the Eleventh Circuit. Yesterday, cloture was invoked by a vote of 76 to 32, and we will have the vote on the Pryor nomination at 4 p.m. today. Following that vote, we will turn to the consideration of the two Sixth Circuit nominations that are pending on the Executive Calendar, with the time allotted for the Griffin and McKeague nominations totalling 10 hours. However, it is my hope and expectation that much of that time can be yielded back and that we can have those votes either very late this afternoon or early this evening. On Monday, we will debate the nomination of Tom Griffith to be judge for the D.C. Circuit Court, with that vote occurring Monday evening.

That is an overview of today, pretty much as we have agreed earlier in the week, and the expected votes. We will update Members over the course of the day of changes in the schedule and definitely what the schedule will be on Monday. And then we will follow that with the energy legislation. Following the remarks from the Democratic leader, I have a short statement on energy.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Chair and distinguished majority leader know, I am sorry we have spent so

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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much time on judges, but the fact is I wish to express my appreciation to Democratic Senators for being so cooperative. Since the agreement was made a week or two ago, my Senators have been so cooperative. Senator LEAHY has had to change his whole schedule around this Monday to take care of the Griffith nomination. There has been an agreement made that we are not going to use all the time on Pryor.

I also express my appreciation to Senators LEVIN and STABENOW for allowing us to move forward on the Michigan judges. In spite of the fact that there are some hurt feelings as a result of the way the Michigan Senators were treated, they have agreed to set those aside and move forward on these two individuals. From all I have been able to determine, the two Michigan judges coming before us are well qualified, and there will not be any rancorous debate about either one of them. But I just want the majority leader to know that we have moved forward on these matters as expeditiously as possible, in spite of the relatively difficult time we have had arriving at this point.

I look forward next week to a vigorous debate on the Energy bill. It is great that we are going to be legislating here for a change. This is an extremely important piece of legislation. I am also indicating to all those within the sound of my voice how appreciative—I don't think the word "proud" is right but how appreciative—I am of the work of Senators BINGAMAN and DOMENICI to get the bill to this point.

We haven't had such cooperation on this committee in many years. We have a bill now that was reported out by a heavy margin of the committee, and I think as a result of that we will have some vigorous debate. There are some things on this side we believe should be done differently, but that is what legislation is all about. Again, having spent most of my life as a legislator, I look forward to the Senate returning to what it does best.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I think this 4-week period does demonstrate the Senate responding to the American people and what they expect, the fact that this week we are moving forward on judges, which people know has been very contentious over the last several weeks, months, and even the last couple years. We are making great progress working hand in hand on both sides of the aisle and delivering what the American people want and expect. As the Democratic leader said, we will be returning to an issue I know we care extremely about. We have not been able to make progress in several years. Because of the work of the two leaders, Senators DOMENICI and BINGAMAN, they have delivered an energy bill in a bipartisan way that will come to the Senate floor and be fully debated. We will be spending next week, week and a half, 2 weeks on the bill for debate, offering amendments, and we will start

that process in the early days of next week.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I do wish to comment just a bit further on energy, really as a prelude to what we will be spending a lot of time on beginning hopefully Monday and then spending the course of that week into the next week, and that is the issue surrounding gasoline prices, natural gas prices, concerns that individuals think about every single day as they turn on the lights in their home, as they go to work, on the way filling up the gas tank of their automobile with gasoline, as they use energy sources over the course of the day in the activity of their small business, and that is the energy challenges that are before us, have been before us. Now is the time to address them, and that we will.

With gasoline now averaging over \$2 a gallon, anyone who has gone to the pump lately feels that impact, they feel that squeeze of higher energy prices. It is costing families who have driven to work this morning more and more just to get to work, over the last several years costing them more to go pick up their kids from school in the afternoon, or as many people prepare for summer vacations costing them more because of this increase in energy prices. It is not just the gasoline prices that are climbing. We have rising natural gas prices that have been driving up electric bills in the last 4 months, higher electric bills for everybody, especially families and small businesses.

As energy costs take a bigger and bigger bite in the family budgets, families are able to spend less on other necessities in their lives, whether it is food or shelter or health care. As electric bills consume more and more of the small companies' assets or their bottom lines, they invest less, they invest less in inventory or in capital expenditures, or they invest less in how much they can pay employees working for that small business. In order to keep our economy strong, and it does translate down into jobs, making others' lives more fulfilling every day, we must rely on a reliable and affordable and secure supply of energy, reliable, affordable, and secure. That is the purpose of the Energy bill that will be brought to the floor of the Senate early next week.

Right now, we face enormous challenges, huge challenges. We have not had a comprehensive national energy policy or energy strategy, cohesive strategy in over 10 years. This has contributed to the higher prices. It has threatened our ability to maintain a reliable, affordable, and secure supply of energy for the future. The fact is that—and it is probably the easiest thing to remember when you start talking about energy other than the impact it has on everybody in everyday life—we are too dependent on foreign sources of energy. We have to look to a

more diverse energy series of sources. We have to look to new technologies here at home. Yes, absolutely we need to conserve more, and we also need to produce more in order to enhance our energy independence and to enhance our energy security.

One of the primary energy challenges we face is this reliance on foreign oil. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the United States produced almost as much oil as we consumed, and during that period of time imports were very small. In 1972, however, U.S. oil production began to decline, and that production has been declining steadily ever since. The U.S. consumption of oil has been steadily increasing. So we have declining production and increasing consumption.

As a result, our reliance—this I would say irresponsible reliance that we have today on foreign oil, on imported oil—is growing. Ten years ago, in 1995, we were 47 percent dependent on foreign sources of oil. Today, that 47 percent has grown to a 56-percent dependence on foreign sources of oil. If you project that out, by 2025, if we do nothing, we will be 68-percent dependent on foreign oil; much of it, as we all know, coming from countries that do not necessarily have our best interests at heart.

Today we import most of our oil from Canada, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Mexico. However, as we look forward, the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration did project more and more of the oil we need will come from the OPEC countries in the Middle East.

We must take steps to reduce our dependence on foreign countries and enhance our energy security at home. When we rely on other nations for more than half of our oil supply, we simply put ourselves at greater risk.

While there is no silver bullet that can make us 100-percent energy independent in the near future, there is a lot we can do right now to reduce our dependence and enhance our security. Much of it will be addressed on the floor in the next 2 weeks.

Everything should be on the table, including increasing conservation, enhancing energy efficiency, investing in new technologies that will allow us to both use energy more wisely and tap new sources of energy, and finally, increasing domestic production of energy sources at home. The transportation sector is a prime example. Nearly 70 percent of the oil we use goes to power the cars and trucks we drive every day. If we are serious about reducing our dependence on foreign oil, we must look for new ways to fuel our vehicles. We are already doing this with the hybrid cars—they are becoming more and more popular, as we all know—and with alternative fuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel.

We must continue to move in this direction by continuing to invest in hydrogen fuel cell research. President Bush has stressed this again and again, and he has said his goal is that today's